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Thyroid
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US DOE ARCHIVES
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RG COMMISSION
Collection FC SEABORG
Box 69
ON INCIDENCE OF THYROID FOLDER CANCER OR OTHER DISEASES
IN THE EXPOSED GROUPS 1965-1968

Mr. John T. Conway
Executive Director
Joint Committee on Atomic Energy
Congress of the United States

Dear Mr. Conway:

The following represents the most recent information on the occurrence of thyroid nodules among the people of Rongelap Island who were exposed to fallout on March 1, 1954. Dr. Robert A. Conard of the Medical Department of the Brookhaven National Laboratory has returned from the Marshall Islands where he and his team conducted the latest of the continuing series of medical examinations of these people.

Our last letter on this subject, dated May 12, 1966, reported a cumulative total of 16 Marshallese had been found to have thyroid nodules. Dr. C. L. Dunham also provided the Joint Committee additional comments regarding this problem at the time of the FY 1968 Authorization Hearings.

The recent survey disclosed one new case with a thyroid nodule. This additional case was in a 17-year old boy who had been away on an outlying atoll and, consequently, had not been examined for several years. This brings to 17 the number of diagnosed cases of nodular thyroids among the 69 survivors of the original exposed group.

During the latter part of May 1966, five patients were brought from Rongelap to the Brookhaven Medical Department. After thorough evaluation they were transferred to the New England Deaconess Hospital in Boston for subtotal thyroidectomies. All did well and were returned in June 1966 to Rongelap.

At this time, 11 of the 17 individuals with thyroid nodules have been treated surgically. These 11, nine children and two adults,

CHAIRMAN

14

Mr. John T. Conway

- 2 -

were all found to be in good condition with no further apparent thyroid abnormalities during the March 1967 medical survey.

The nodules in the thyroids of the remaining patients are being treated medically. A decision regarding surgery for any of these individuals has been postponed until thyroid hormone medication can be given an adequate trial.

Dr. Conard reports no other noteworthy medical findings and no unusual illnesses or diseases that could be related to radiation effects.

We will keep you informed of the progress of these studies.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) S. G. English

S. G. English
Assistant General Manager for
Research and Development

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